



## Georgia Department of Human Resources

# EARLY INTERVENTION BECAUSE BABIES CAN'T WAIT

### **Why is early intervention important?**

Babies develop very quickly. Half of their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth takes place in the first few years of life. These early years are the critical foundation for later learning.

Each year in Georgia, more than 10,000 babies are born with, or later develop, conditions that affect typical growth and learning. Without early help, even conditions that are mild in the beginning can become more severe as a child grows older. With early intervention, a child who is developing slowly has a greater chance of reaching his or her developmental potential.

Studies show that for every \$1 spent on early intervention, \$7 can be saved on additional services that might otherwise be needed later in the child's life.

### **What is Babies Can't Wait?**

The Babies Can't Wait (BCW) early intervention process begins with a complete evaluation and assessment of the child's development. If the child has a significant developmental delay or disability, the next step is to identify the child's developmental strengths and needs and the family's priorities and goals for their child. Appropriate services needed to support these goals are identified and are provided in a manner that supports parents and other primary caregivers in using typical daily activities and routines to increase everyday learning opportunities for each child.

Georgia's Babies Can't Wait early intervention system has served Georgia's children and families since 1987. During the past year the program has supported over 11,000 children and their families.

### **What services are made available?**

Every child enrolled in BCW has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), based on the results of evaluations, assessments, and the family's priorities related to their child's development. The plan includes goals for the child and family; supports needed to meet the goals; and resources to help the family pay for services. Evaluation, assessment, and service coordination are offered to families at no cost. Third party payment sources, family cost participation, and state resources may all be used to fund needed services and/or supports.

Babies Can't Wait also coaches families and caregivers on how to support their children's development, provides them with information, and links them with formal and informal resources in their communities.

The FY 2006 budget for BCW is \$23,906,166 (\$9,924,314 in state funds and \$13,981,852 in federal funds).

*fact sheet*

**Who is eligible?**

Children, from birth to their third birthday, regardless of income, may be eligible for BCW in one of two ways:

- 1) Children are automatically eligible if they are diagnosed with certain mental or physical conditions which are known to lead to developmental delay, including but not limited to: Down Syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, and/or autism; or
- 2) Children who are determined to be experiencing significant delays in any aspect of their development upon evaluation/assessment also may be eligible.

**How to contact Babies Can't Wait**

Anyone who suspects that a child may be delayed in his/her development can visit <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/> or call toll-free 1-800-229-2038 or, in Atlanta, 770-451-5484 to find the closest BCW office. Parents also may ask to speak to another parent whose child has a similar disability. For additional information, call Babies Can't Wait at 404-657-2726 or 1-888-651-8224.

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